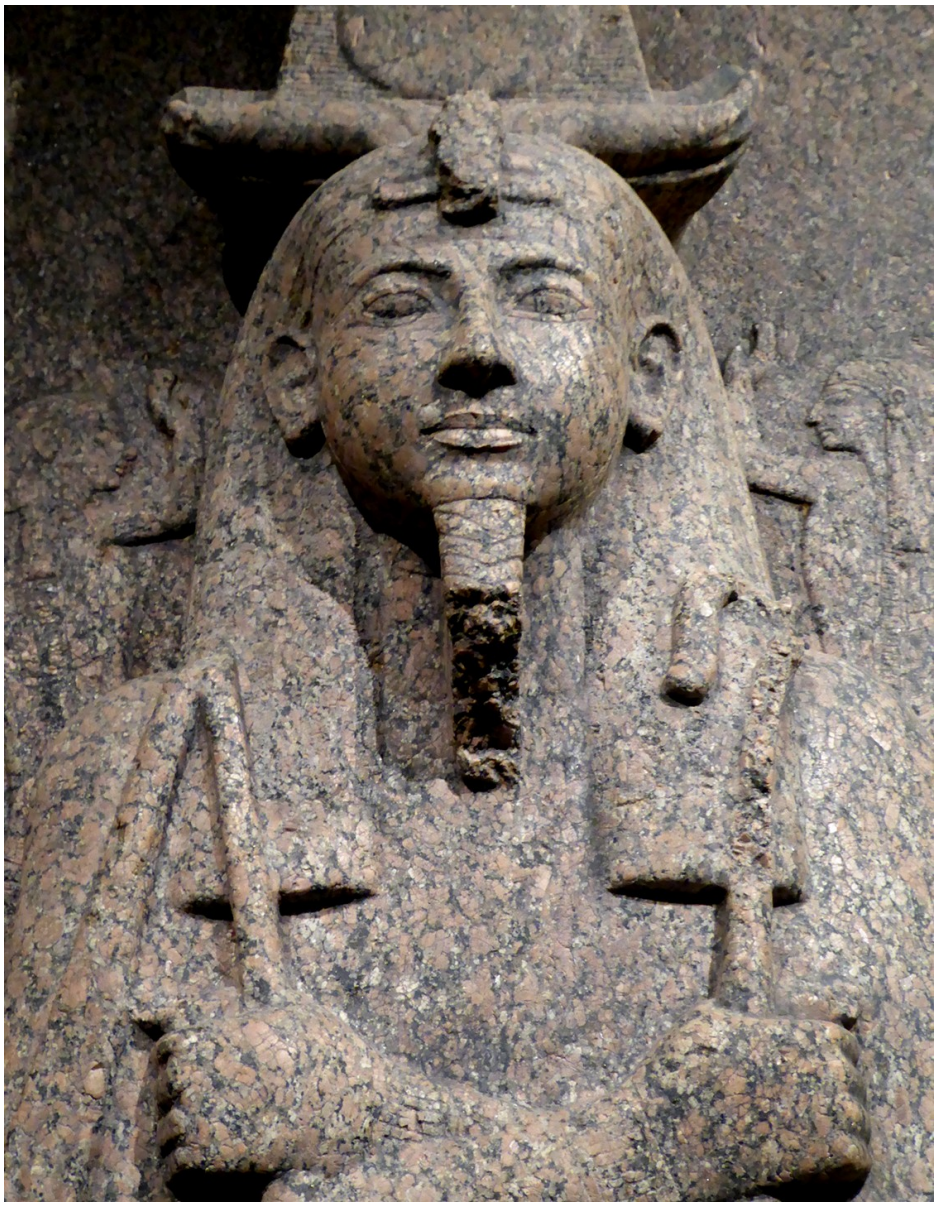

The War between the Theban Egyptians and the “Hyksos”: The Late *Second Phase*: The “Sea Peoples” Confederation of Circumcised Tribes *Strikes Back:* A Study of Inscriptions from the reign of Amenhotep the Great to that of Ramesses the Third;

The Solar Kings of Egypt persevere in their struggles to defend their homeland against "those who came from the sea"*;

The Mysterious Phoenicians–"Sea Peoples" Alliance and its Massive Assault on Egypt are Defeated in Great Battles in the Nile Delta and in the Levant;

Under Ramesses the Third, a Terrible Egyptian Secret Weapon (?) Reduces the Unsuspecting Hordes to "Ashes" in a Carefully Planned Ambush;

The Likely Real Message of the "Israel Stela":
Israel was one of the misleadingly named "Sea Peoples", and was defeated by Pharaoh Merneptah

By Edmund Schilvold (M.Th.)

*Manassa, 2003, p. 3

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Introduction – with a consideration of the identity of the “Sea Peoples”

This small e-book contains the message of the so-called Merneptah Stela, a famous ancient Egyptian artefact discovered in 1896, in the ruins of Pharaoh Merneptah’s mortuary temple, i.e. in the vicinity of the site of the ancient city of Thebes, by the pioneering English archaeologist Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie. It has also become known as the “Israel Stela”, due to a brief mention of a somewhat mysterious entity styled “Israel” near the end of the extensive commemorative text – a text which might be compared to the one found on the Second Kamose Stela (c.f. my e-book on that stela elsewhere on my profile).

Both of the above mentioned designations are actually rather misleading, however, since the stela itself, a huge stone slab of black granite, more than three meters tall, was not made during the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah at all (Mer-ne-Ptah; c. 1213–1203, also known as Merenptah), and since Merneptah's text is not primarily about Israel – the black monolith in question was in fact commissioned more than a century earlier, by Pharaoh Amenhotep III (c. 1390 –1353), also known as Amenhotep the Great (the father of the rogue pharaoh Akhenaten, who, in my view, seems to have misunderstood the traditional Egyptian theology he so ardently opposed and sought to destroy), who had it inscribed with a text celebrating the building of several new temples and a river barque dedicated to the Sun, Amen/Amun/Amon/Ammon, and it is this "Amenhotep III Sacred Architecture Stela" (as one might call it) which was *reused* by Merneptah, when he arranged for a text detailing his victories over the so-called Libyans to be recorded on its previously blank *backside*.

As Dr. Eric H. Cline has pointed out in an article on Merneptah's message, moreover, there is a *context* here which is rarely mentioned, namely that the inscription in question is actually only one of *five* exceedingly interesting inscriptions which were all made at around the same time, and which all deal with Merneptah's battles against the so-called *Sea Peoples* (a modern academic designation which, *in that exact form*, was never used by the ancient Egyptians themselves, as far as I can see) and their allies – an enigmatic coalition including the Libyans mentioned on the "Merneptah Stela" – and which constitute the first mention in recorded history of the terrible alliance that would later, during the reign of Ramesses III (1187–1157), attack Egypt for a second time.

This important but oft-neglected context raises some intriguing questions. *What* was the role of the people styled "Israel" in this huge and protracted conflict – the scale and impact of which might perhaps be compared to the "world wars" of the twentieth century (which may have fatally weakened

the civilizations which took part in them, paving the pay for their slow and premature demise)?

Was the “Israel” mentioned by Merneptah, the “Israel” present in Egypt’s Retjenu province (Canaan/Palestine/the Levant) *also* attacked by the somewhat misleadingly styled “Sea Peoples” confederacy? Or was Israel in fact one of the nations making up the somewhat misleadingly named “Sea Peoples”, and attacked by King Merneptah after his triumph over the “Libyans” *precisely because* of the role played by this “Israel” in the war against and the attempted invasion of Egypt?

The Libyans spoken of by Merneptah could conceivably be a branch of the Phoenicians (who are more or less identical to the ethnic entity called “Fenkhu” by the Egyptians), since the Phoenicians would later establish, *or were already in the process of establishing*, colonies on the northern coast of Africa (the most famous Phoenician colony being the city of Carthage, founded by the city of Tyre, against which Rome would fight a series of wars, the “Punic Wars”, some one thousand years later), while the famous “Dan” of the Sea Peoples coalition that ravaged the eastern Mediterranean region during the reign of Ramesses III (yet apparently left Phoenician cities under Phoenician control untouched, c.f. separate introduction to this question below) could, *perhaps*, have taken its name from the “Hyksos” city of Ta-ur or Tanr or Zoan (the “sister city” of Avaris in the Delta; likely named after the deity Typhon’s female consort, one of whose names was Tanr – c.f. my 2025 paper “Reminiscences from Greco–Roman Times Pertaining to the ‘Proto-Israelites’ and their Cult of Seth/Typhon in Avaris”), better known as *Tanis*, and would, if that be the case, not be related to Homer’s Greek and Indo-European “Danaoi” at all (as has often been surmised), but instead be of “Hyksos” or Amu extraction. (Also consider the fact that the Phoenicians were, according to the dated but rigorous New Advent Encyclopedia, “called ‘Dahe’ or ‘Zahi’, and ‘Fenkhu’” by the Egyptian kings of the early 18th dynasty, and that the ancient Egyptian name for Tanis was *Djanet* (El Azazy, 2025).)

Incidentally, one of the “Horus Names” assumed by King Ramesses III was “The powerful bull, potent of sword, strong-armed, lord of dread in the lowlands and the highlands of the Fenkhu-Asiatics and the Temehu-Libyans”, or “Ka pehty, sekhem khepesh, nakht-a, neb neru em tau khasut Fenkhu Temehu” in Egyptian (https://pharaoh.se/ancient-egypt/pharaoh/ramesses-iii/).

A further thought presents itself: Since we now know for certain (due to archaeological and textual evidence accumulated over c. two centuries, since the time of Napoleon’s exploration of Egypt – the pioneering adventure which contributed greatly to the founding of modern archaeology) that (1) much of the “Hebrew” Tanakh, which is roughly equivalent to the “Old Testament” of orthodox Christianity, presents *real* ancient history, but in a highly one-sided and polemical and therefore distorted form, and that (2) it sometimes, as in the Book of Exodus, employs literary and propagandistic devices like inversion (turning occupiers and rulers into slaves and victims, for example – while nevertheless insinuating the truth), deliberate omission (as when no mention of the Egyptian point of view is made at all, except in a form which serves the “Hebrew” narrative), double meaning and a particular kind of wry humor (aimed at those “in the know”), and we also know, *albeit with less certainty*, that (3) the Old Testament figure of “King Solomon”, who probably never existed as depicted in “Holy Writ”, may well be loosely based on the “Hyksos” emperor Apepi/Apophis, for example, it does not seem entirely impossible that the grand Exodus and Numbers narratives involving the Twelve Tribes could have been invented *in response to* and as a conscious romanticization and “countering” of the very real historical fact that is the appearance of the “Sea Peoples” coalition, which was simply a collection of tribes or small nations, or rather of their warriors, originating in various Mediterranean and Near Eastern locations. The fact that familiar names like “Dan” and “Israel” appear in

association with the coalition just mentioned would seem to lend credibility to this hypothesis.

Dr. Eric H. Cline (of the George Washington University) summarizes the "Sea Peoples" problem and the questions raised by Merneptah's inscriptions well in his 2009 article styled "The Sea Peoples' Possible Role in the Israelite Conquest of Canaan" – the speculative suggestions of which I strongly disagree with, however, since I think it can be shown that the main "Israelite" exodus is, in all likelihood, identical to the "Hyksos" exodus attested to by both ancient historians and archaeological excavations, and that the Exodus portrayed in a polemical and highly polished form in the Biblical book of that name must, therefore, have taken place in the 1500s B.C. (C.f. my 2025 article "Reflections on the Historicity of the Exodus".)

This dating of the Exodus to the end of Egypt's euphemistically named Second Intermediate Period, and to the time of Pharaoh Ahmose (actual Egyptian name Yah-Mesu) is actually in perfect accord with almost all the recorded opinions on this topic voiced by prominent historians and church fathers of Greco-Roman times, and the controversy regarding the when and how the Exodus occurred, and who it involved, is, surprisingly, of comparatively recent origin, and should perhaps be viewed as having been *deliberately* generated, so as to cover up the identity of "Israel" with the "Hyksos" or Amu, and to break the association of the mass departure of the former with the latter – a move which would have become increasingly important to the purveyors of the largely artificially constructed historical entity that is "God's chosen people" or a divinely "chosen" and superior nation as more and more "disturbing" archaeological evidence, revealing the stunning yet "inconvenient" historical truth, began to come to light over the course of the 1800s, when pioneering European (French, Prussian, English) expeditions made one shocking discovery after another, and the nature of Egyptian civilization, and of its enemies, hidden for some two thousand years by both the sands

of the desert and the strangely comprehensive “loss” of virtually *all* the prominent ancient historical treatises which spoke about Egypt, began to be pieced together – particularly by scholars in Germany and the Netherlands.

The only “exodus” which may have taken place *subsequent* to the 1500s B.C. is the possible flight of Akhenaten and his (“leprous” or heretical?) supporters when his revolution had failed, but that would have been a significantly smaller migration, rather different in nature from the truly epic events forming the conclusion to the decades of war and conflict between the native Egyptians of Thebes and their “Hyksos” or Amu overlords ensconced behind the great walls of the city of Avaris in the eastern part of the Nile Delta (the Biblical “Goshen”).

This is how Dr. Cline presents the “Sea Peoples” enigma (excerpts):

“At the very least, it is clear that the earliest record attesting to the existence of Israel and the first indications of the phenomenon known as the Sea Peoples are two processes which occurred simultaneously.” (2009, p. 191)

“In four separate yet related inscriptions {in addition to the one found on the ‘Merneptah Stela’}, Pharaoh Merneptah’s scribes recorded that in the tenth month of the fifth year of his reign (c. 1207 BCE), Egypt’s western Delta was invaded by a Libyan army. The Libyans were accompanied by allies – foreigners from across the sea – specifically the Eqwesh, Teresh, Lukka, Shardana, and Shekelesh. The identification of these various Sea Peoples has been debated for the past half-century and more (…).” (2009, p. 191)

“Hastily gathering his troops together, **Merneptah defeated the combined attack of the Libyans and the Sea Peoples less than a month later, on the third day of the eleventh month of that year (approximately 15 April 1207 BCE on our modern calendars**, according to James Henry Breasted), and recorded the victory on several monuments.

Unknown to him, a second wave of Sea Peoples would attack Canaan and Egypt yet again twenty years later, in approximately 1186 BCE, during the time of his successor Ramses III.

Merneptah’s relevant inscriptions were engraved on a wall at the Temple of Karnak, on a granite stele erected at Athribis in the southern Delta, on a granite column currently in the Cairo Museum, and on another column erected at Heliopolis.

The inscription preserved on the wall at the Temple of Karnak, usually referred to as the ‘Great Karnak Inscription,’ begins as follows: ‘[Beginning of the victory that his majesty achieved in the land of Libya] … Eqwesh, Teresh, Lukka, Shardana, Shekelesh, Northerners coming from all lands.’” (2009, p. 192, emphasis added)

“The so-called ‘Israel Stele’ of Merneptah was discovered by Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie in February 1896 within Merneptah’s mortuary temple, located near the Valley of the Kings across the Nile river from the modern town of Luxor. The inscription itself, a long hymn primarily concerned with Merneptah’s victory over the Libyans, was carved on the back of a large black granite stele, measuring 10 feet 3 inches tall by 5 feet 4 inches wide and 13 inches thick. The stele had been taken by Merneptah from the nearby mortuary temple of Amenhotep III and has an inscription recording Amenhotep III’s building program on the front side of the stele. On the more famous side of the stele, Merneptah’s inscription is, as mentioned, primarily concerned with his victory over the Libyans.

This inscription should undoubtedly be included among the other texts recording Merneptah's victory over the Sea Peoples, for those texts all note that the Sea Peoples were invading as allies of the Libyans – as has been seen above. However, this monument for some reason does not list the northern allies of the Libyans, i.e. the various Sea Peoples, but concerns itself only with the Libyans themselves, until the last section, when Canaan, Israel, Ashkelon, Gezer, and Yanoam are all mentioned. The text of the inscription begins with the exact same date as given on the Athribis stele: 'Year 5, third month of the third season, third day, under the majesty of Horus…' It then continues with a description of the rout of the Libyans and the fall of the Libyan chief, followed by various sections concerned with Merneptah's fame in Libya, the divine protection of Egypt and Merneptah's divine appointment, and the rejoicing of the Egyptians.

Clearly, this account documents the same battle recorded on the stele at Athribis, and on the other three inscriptions as well, during which Merneptah defeated the Libyans and the Sea Peoples." (2009, p. 193)

"**It is clear that the 'Israel Stele' should not be discussed in isolation, as it usually is, but instead must be included with the other four inscriptions more usually discussed in the context of Merneptah's war against the Libyans and the Sea Peoples, for all five inscriptions are primarily concerned with that war.** The principal differences of interest to us here are that the first four inscriptions mention the various Sea Peoples by name but do not mention Israel or cities in Canaan, while the 'Israel Stele' contains a final section mentioning Israel and cities in Canaan but does not mention the individual Sea Peoples. Why the 'Israel Stele' contains this last section, not present on the other inscriptions, and why it omits mention of the specific Sea Peoples, is not clear." (2009, p. 194, emphasis added)

All **the tribes of "Sea Peoples" spoken of by Merneptah may have been *circumcised***

One extraordinary and most surprising circumstance, not mentioned in Dr. Cline's 2009 paper, nor in the massive *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* volume (1969) edited by James B. Pritchard, is the fact that the surviving parts of Merneptah's "Great Karnak Inscription", which belong to the same category of Egyptian victory texts as the one mentioning an "Israel", state both explicitly and indirectly that three of the "Sea Peoples" tribes, the Eqwesh, the Shardana and the Shekelesh, were circumcised, since it not only says that these three "did not have foreskins", but also that one of their hands were cut off, as opposed to their penis, and it seems that the Egyptians (at this stage in their history, at least) only spared the penis of an enemy soldier from mutilation if it was found to be circumcised – probably because the native Egyptians were themselves circumcised (this rite was an ancient Egyptian custom, as various wall reliefs show; c.f. my 2024 essay, "An Introduction to Fragments of the Real History of Israel"), and because this curious procedure was viewed as rendering the penis holy, or as imparting a certain dignity to it.

The Teresh (or Tursha) and the Lukka may have been circumcised as well, but the substantial lacunas in the inscription only allow for the making out of the statement that the hands of the former were also cut off (a fact which, as pointed out above, makes it highly likely that the Teresh were circumcised as well), and have entirely obscured the original remarks as regards the Lukka.

These are some of the crucial parts of the Great Karnak Inscription:

"[... Sher]den {or Shardana}, Shekelesh, Akawasha {or Eqwesh} from the foreign lands of the sea who did not have fore [skins...] ..." (...)

“[…Aka]washa who did not have foreskins who were slain and their hands carried off, because they did not have [foreskins …” (…)
(Manassa, 2003, p. 163)

This oft-overlooked feature of the nations of the sea may perhaps provide us with the key which will finally enable us to determine the ethnicity of these Sea People’s, whose origin and nationhood has been debated for around a century, for Herodotus, who admittedly lived and wrote almost a thousand years later, but who was no ignoramus (albeit not always reliable), explains that *only the Egyptians and the Ethiopians and those who learned circumcision from them are circumcised*, and we also know that the Greeks or Hellenes of Classical Antiquity abhorred the practice of removing the foreskin, and that exposing the glans was viewed by them as *scandalous* (Venkatachalam, 2018). It therefore seems rather unlikely that the Akawasha, or any of the other Sea Peoples, were Greek (the Akawasha have often been equated with the Achaeans, on the basis of the similarity between the two ethnonyms).

Another striking piece of information provided to us by the Great Karnak Inscription, which is in a rather bad state of preservation, and missing a number of parts, is that the Egyptians captured no less than *9,111 copper swords* brought to the battle by the Meshwesh:

“weapons of combat which were in their hands brought as plunder: copper swords of the Meshwesh: 9,111” (Manassa, 2003, p. 163)

The translator of King Merneptah’s Karnak inscription, Colleen Manassa, has this to say of the Meshwesh and their peculiarly high number of swords made of copper:

“The rise in the number of sword-bearing Libyan infantry appears to be directly related to their contacts with the Sea Peoples at the beginning of the 13th century BC, and the Meshwesh Libyans seem to be the specific

group serving as intermediaries between the Mediterranean groups and the other Libyans.

The first evidence for swords in any plunder list relating to a Libyan campaign is during the reign of Merneptah, and in his documents, the number of swords is surprisingly high. The text on the Heliopolis Victory Column shows that the Egyptians captured, from both the Libyans and Sea Peoples, a total of 9,268 swords, 6,860 bows, and 128,660 arrows.

Admittedly, the large number of sword-bearing Sea Peoples certainly contributed to the high proportion of swords relative to bows. But the otherwise enigmatic ‘9,111 swords of the Meshwesh’ in the Karnak Inscription (In. 58) alludes to the Meshwesh Libyans’ special role, and by the time of the Year 11 battle of Ramesses III against the Libyans, the main opposition comes from the Meshwesh, who are depicted brandishing their long swords.

The Meshwesh were only one among many Libyan groups in the invasion under Merneptah, but seem to already be linked with swords production and trade.” (Manassa, 2003, p. 88)

The testimony of Herodotus: Only the Egyptians and Ethiopians and *those who learned it from them* practice male circumcision

Regarding circumcision, Herodotus first says the following, in his somewhat jocular introduction to the customs of the Egyptians – an introduction which should probably be taken with a grain of salt:

> “But concerning Egypt, I am going to speak at length, because it has the most wonders, and everywhere presents works beyond description; therefore, I shall say the more concerning Egypt.” (Herodotus, 2025, 2.35.1)

> “Just as the Egyptians have a climate peculiar to themselves, and their river is different in its nature from all other rivers, so, too, have they instituted customs and laws contrary for the most part to those of the rest of mankind.” (Ibid, 2.35.2)
>
> “**The Egyptians and those who have learned it from them are the only people who practise circumcision.**” (*Original Greek*: τὰ αἰδοῖα ὦλλοι μὲν ἐῶσι ὡς ἐγένοντο, πλὴν ὅσοι ἀπὸ τούτων ἔμαθον, Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ περιτάμνονται.) (Ibid, 2.36.3)

This statement, while seemingly conclusive, is disputed by modern scholars, but fits rather well with the possibility raised by the history of the Semitic “Hyksos” or Amu we have treated of elsewhere (in “The War between the Theban Egyptians and the ‘’Hyksos” series papers), namely that these ancestors of the “Israelites” adopted this custom when they began settling in Egypt as workers and mercenaries some 3,800 years ago, and that they later brought this ritual with them when they were forced to leave their cities in the Nile Delta and seek refuge in Retjenu/Canaan/the Levant.

One ancient inscription which might be taken to indicate that the male portion of the “Hyksos” or Amu population was in fact circumcised, at least by the end of the Second Intermediate Period, is the one now known as the *Autobiography of Ahmose, Son of Abana*, for there the ritual of the taking of hands from defeated and presumably dead enemies is repeatedly mentioned in conjunction with a great battle before the walls of Avaris, the foremost stronghold of the “Hyksos” in the Delta, and if the native Egyptians were adhering to the same battle customs in the 1500s as they were when King Merneptah vanquished the “Sea Peoples”, this implies that the Semitic Amu warriors encountered and slain by Ahmose were also without “foreskins”, since, as already stated, the Egyptians of King Merneptah’s time would only cut off the hand – presumably the right

hand – of an enemy if he was found to be circumcised; if he was not, they would cut off his penis instead. Below is an example of what the *Autobiography* says:

> When the town of Avaris was besieged,
> I showed valour on foot in His Majesty's presence
> Then I was assigned to 'Rising in Memphis',
> and there was fighting on the water in Padjedku of Avaris.
> Then I made a capture and carried off a hand.
> When it was reported to the royal herald, I was given gold of valour.
> Then there was more fighting in this place,
> again I made a capture there and carried off a hand,
> and again I was given gold of valour.
> (Ahmose, Son of Abana, 2014)

Herodotus later modifies his statement in the following way, linking the rite practiced by the Phoenicians and the Syrians, from whom the Semitic Canaanites who migrated into Egypt and who gave birth to the "Hyksos" rulers came (as the archaeological evidence uncovered by Manfred Bietak and his team amply demonstrates), to the ancient Egyptian one:

> "Leaving the latter aside, then, I shall speak of the king who came after them, whose name was Sesostris [believed to be *Ramesses II* by the authors of the notes accompanying this edition of Herodotus' *Histories*]." (2.102.1)

> "(…) but my better proof was that the Colchians [a nation of dark-skinned ("μελάγχρως") and woolly-haired ("οὐλόθριξ") people living by the river Phasis in present-day Georgia, whom Herodotus believes to be descended from a segment of the army of "Sesostris"] and Egyptians and Ethiopians are the only nations that have from the first practised circumcision." (2.104.2)

> “**The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine acknowledge that they learned the custom from the Egyptians**, and the Syrians of the valleys of the Thermodon and the Parthenius, as well as their neighbors the Macrones, say that they learned it lately from the Colchians. These are the only nations that circumcise, and it is seen that they do just as the Egyptians.” (2.104.3, emphasis added)
>
> “But as to the Egyptians and Ethiopians themselves, I cannot say which nation learned it from the other; for it is evidently a very ancient custom. That the others learned it through traffic with Egypt, I consider clearly proved by this: that **Phoenicians who traffic with Hellas cease to imitate the Egyptians in this matter and do not circumcise their children**.” (2.104.4, emphasis added)

Lukka from Lycia, Sherden clothed like the Canaanites and the Shasu (of YHWH)?

According to an article by the independent researcher Dr. Carlos Moreu, “It is generally agreed that the Lukka were the inhabitants of Lycia, in south-western Anatolia, during the Late Bronze Age. **The Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of Yalburt, found in Turkey, dates to the age of the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV (13th century BC), and it mentions the land of Lukka together with four towns (…) identified as Lycian cities**, which survived in later times with very similar names.

The Lukka were already cited in one of the El-Amarna letters (EA 38), reporting that they raided Cyprus and Egypt during the 14th century BC. This letter was sent by the king of Alasiya (Cyprus) to the Pharaoh. And we also know that the Lukka, recruited by the Hittites, fought against the Egyptian army of Ramesses II in the battle of Kadesh, together with other

western Anatolian groups coming from the lands of Arzawa and Masa. Therefore it is very likely that the five Sea Peoples named in the Great Karnak Inscription, who were ‘northerners coming from all lands’, had their original homelands in Anatolia and the Aegean Sea (…).

(…)

With regard to the Sherden, the letters EA 81, EA 122 and EA 123 (from El-Amarna) give information on the activities of some Sherden warriors in the Canaanite city of Byblos, dating to the 14th century BC.

In year 2 of Ramesses II, the Sherden attacked northern Egypt and, after being defeated, their captive warriors were recruited in the Egyptian army and thus they fought three years later in the battle of Kadesh.

In a rhetorical stela of Ramesses II from Tanis, relating the event of year 2, the Sherden are described as follows: “the unruly Sherden whom no one had ever known how to combat, they come boldly in their warships from the midst of the sea, none being able to withstand them” (KRI II 290. 1- 4). In the 12th century BC, the Sherden fought as auxiliary troops of the Egyptian army.

(Moreu, 2020, p. 2, emphasis added)

There are also the clues provided by clothing and weaponry mentioned by Carlos Moreu:

They [the Sherden] are depicted in the wall reliefs of Medinet Habu, the mortuary temple of Pharaoh Ramesses III. In most scenes, they are of a similar appearance to that of other Sea Peoples depicted in those reliefs. **They wear the same kind of skirt, and they are armed with round shields and the typical swords of triangled blade, also used by**

the Sea Peoples who confront the Egyptian army in year 8 of Ramesses III. The only difference is the horned helmet with a sun-disc at the top, used by the Sherden. (…)

The clothes and armament used by these Sea Peoples, depicted in the wall reliefs of Medinet Habu, are most probably of Asiatic origin, as has been argued by J. Vanschoonwinkel. **Their typical skirts were also used by the Syrians and the Canaanite people named Shasu, according to the reliefs of Seti I in Karnak**, and even by some Egyptian warriors at the age of Ramesses III. These skirts were divided in four or six areas by crossed ribbons.

(…)

The same Levantine origin for the Sherden swords was explained by N. K. Sandars in her classic book on the Sea Peoples (chapter 5). **She argued that these swords were an evolution of the typical dagger used in the Levant during the Middle Bronze Age**, showing a dagger and a sword from Canaan that are exhibited in the British Museum and are dated to that period.

This fact also indicates that the Sea Peoples named Sherden and Shekelesh were Anatolian, like the Lukka people from Lycia, and thus they did not arrive from Sardinia and Sicily.

(Moreu, 2020, pp. 2–3, emphasis added)

Within this same e-book, subsequent to the translations into English of Amenhotep the Great’s and Merneptah’s messages to posterity, are also found the several messages of Ramesses the Third’s pertaining to the Sea Peoples, since the *second* wave of these tribes, and their *second* attempted invasion of Egypt, during the reign of the latter king of all

Egypt, are of course of great relevance to any reading and interpretation of Merneptah's inscription.

Front page illustration: The amazing *granite* coffin lid of the sarcophagus of King Ramesses III (on a personal note, I will never forget the first time I saw a black and white photograph of this lid, as it sent chills down my spine. The artistry and craftsmanship here displayed is nothing short of stunning.) Fitzwilliam Museum.

The footnotes accompanying the translations have been put within ((double parentheses)), for the sake of legibility, while the numbers referring to the lines on the stela have been retained in (single parentheses).

Significant additions to the text of the original translations (commentary) have been put within {curly brackets}, and have sometimes also been marked with the initials of the undersigned, i.e. with "E.S.", for the sake of clarity.

The reader should note that this document is part of a new series of concise e-books of mine dealing with the ancient Egyptian stela and papyri and monuments pertaining to or having some bearing on the so-called *Enigma of the Hyksos*, which, in my humble view, is not much of an enigma anymore. It is, after all, some *160 years* since Willem Pleyte (1836–1903), a pioneering Dutch Egyptologist, published his ground-breaking work on the Hyksos and the Cult of Seth, *La religion des pré-Israélites* [the Religion of the Proto-Israelites]: *recherches sur le dieu Seth* [Research on the Deity of Seth] – a work which was in fact held in high esteem by a number of prominent scholars in the late 1800s, but which was never, interestingly, fully translated into English – and more than *half a century* since the Austrian Archaeological Institute began its systematic excavations of the site of the ancient city of Avaris (which Prof. Dr.

Brugsch-Bey thought is identical to Ba'al-zephon, or Ha-u'ar, c.f. Schilvold, 2024, p. 17–18). As far as I am able to ascertain, we presently know more than enough to be able to conclude that ancient historians like Josephus, Manetho, Apion and Ptolomy of Mendes were right when they identified the “Israelites”, or some of their ancestors, with the Hyksos expelled from the Egyptian Delta during the reign of Ahmose, Liberator of All Egypt, and Founder of the 18th Dynasty.

The “Bronze Age Collapse” and the supposed “Sea Peoples” role in it

The “Sea Peoples” are, unfortunately, believed to be the group of peoples primarily responsible for the collapse of the high civilizations around the easternmost parts of the Mediterranean in the latter part of the Bronze Age, around 3200 years ago (which is also the time usually assigned to the Fall of the City of Troy).

There is no scholarly consensus as regards the exact identities of these ancient peoples or *tribes*, nor have academics been able to agree on why they fairly suddenly burst forth from their places of origin and what their purposes were, *but one undeniable fact of the case is that all the major Phoenician cities in the Levant – those under Phoenician control – were, insofar as the present state of the archaeological evidence allows for the drawing of conclusions, left untouched*, while terrible devastation was wrought virtually all around them – to the north, in the lands of the powerful Hittites, to the south, on the fringes and frontiers of the Egyptian Empire, which only barely escaped invasion and destruction during the initial onslaughts of the barbarian hordes, and to the northwest, in the region of the Greek Mycenaeans. This disparity when it comes to the Sea People’s treatment of the various societies in the region – a disparity which would seem to be made all the more striking by the additional fact that the foremost cities of the Phoenicians were located right on or very

near the unprotected eastern Mediterranean coastline, and therefore right where the boat-borne portions of the marauding tribes must have come, while the cities of the Mycenaeans and the Egyptians and the Hittites were, for the most part, only to be found a significant distance away from the open seaboards – would seem to be provide one important clue to the enigma.

If the Phoenician cities were able to purchase security and immunity due to their great wealth (they were probably already producing the world famous and incredibly expensive dye now called Tyrian purple), then *why* was not the Egypt of the late golden age that was the 19th Dynasty, and the Mycenae celebrated by Homer as “golden”, and the powerful highland capital of the Hittites, Hattusa – the capital of a people whose royal house had attained to such levels of prestige that it had been able to intermarry with the Egyptian one (c.f. the text of the Marriage Stela below) – able to come to a similar agreement with the warlike mariners? What difference between the Phoenicians and the three kingdoms just mentioned ensured the safety of the former and the destruction, or the attempted destruction, of the latter?

Edmund Schilvold
September 2025 (minor additions made in January 2026)

The text on the front of the so-called “Merneptah” or “Israel” stela (a stela created almost two centuries before the reign of Merneptah, by Amenhotep III, to celebrate his architectural program) (1350s B.C.)

{James B. Pritchard’s editorial introduction to Pharaoh Amen-hotep’s message to posterity commemorating the building of glorious new temples and a great river boat dedicated to Amen-Re/Amun-Ra:}

From Amen-hotep Ill’s Building Inscription

The following inscription illustrates the reciprocal relation between pharaoh and god in ancient Egypt. At great length Amen-hotep III (about 1413–1377 B.C.) {according to the “High Chronology” system for dating, but the traditional chronology, which constitutes a middle road between the “high” and “low” estimates, dates his reign to **1390–1353. – E.S.**} details his building activities on behalf of the god Amon-Re {or Amen-Re}. The text closes with the grateful hymn of the god to the king.

{Note: The “Biblical” bias with which many, even now, tend to look at ancient Egypt and its records is strikingly revealed in and by the fact that the stela on which this important text is recorded – a stela commissioned by one of Egypt’s greatest kings – has become known not for this

inscription, which is the inscription on its front side, but for the much later inscription on its backside, and not because that second inscription celebrates the crucial victories of King Merneptah, but because it mentions an “Israel” towards its very end. This gazing at one of the greatest high civilizations of all of human history through the lens of through what we now know to be the polemical and one-sided and hostile accounts of the “Israelites” must be abandoned, if the goal is a fair and balanced portrayal of the past. – E.S.}

The stela is now Cairo 34025. It was set up by Amen-hotep III in his temple which stood behind the Colossi of Memnon at Thebes. The text was thoroughly hacked up under the Amarna Revolution {i.e. by the son of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten}, but restored under Seti I.

Then Mer-ne-Ptah appropriated the stela and used its back for the “Israel Stela” in his mortuary temple, where it was found by W. M. F. Petrie; see his *Six Temples at Thebes* (London, 1897), 10–11, 23–26; Pls. XI–XII. It was published by P. Lacau, *Steles du nouvel empire* (*Catalogue general … du Musee du Caire*, Cairo, 1909), I, 47–52, Pls. XV–XVI. It was translated by Breasted, *AR*, II, §§878–92.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 375, emphasis added)

{The text itself (translation; quote from the inscription)}

… (Amen-hotep III) {or Amen-hotep, heqa Waset; Amen is Satisfied, Ruler of Thebes, the birth name of the king}.

He made, as (3) his monument for **his father Amon** {or Amen, or Amun}, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, the erecting for him of an august temple on the west side of Thebes {Waset}, **an everlasting**

fortress, a possessor of eternity, of fine sandstone, worked with gold throughout. ((1))

Its pavement was washed with silver, all its doorways with fine gold. It was made very wide and great, embellished forever, made festive with this very great monument, and abounding in statues of the lord ((2)) **in the granite of Elephantine**, gritstone, and every (5) august costly stone, perfected with the work of eternity.

Their height shines up to heaven; their rays are in (men's) faces like the sun disc ((3)), when he shines at dawn.

It is equipped with a Station {or Throne?} of the Lord ((4)), worked with gold and many costly stones.
At its face **flagstaffs** have been set up, worked with fine gold. It is made like the horizon which is in heaven when Re shines forth therein.

Its canal is filled with the high Nile, the lord of fish and fowl, pure in *bouquets*.

Its workhouse is filled with male and female slaves, the children of the princes of every foreign country of his majesty's plundering.

Its magazines enclose good things of which the count is not known.

It is surrounded with Syrian towns, settled with the children of princes. ((5))

Its cattle are like the sands of the shore; they total millions. It has the prow-rope of the Southland and the stern-rope of the Northland. ((6)) …

I made another monument for him who begot me, Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, who is established upon his throne, (in)

making for him **a great barque upon the river, “Amon-Re in Userhet,” of (17) new cedar which his majesty cut in the country of God’s Land** ((7)), dragged from the mountains of Retenu {or Retjenu} by the princes of all foreign countries.

It was made very wide and great. The like had never been made. Its hull is washed with silver and completely worked with gold. The great shrine is of fine gold...

1 made other monuments for Amon, (24) of which the like has never occurred {been seen}.

I built for thee thy house of millions of years in the precinct of Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, “Appearing in Truth,” an august (place) of fine gold, a resting place for my father in all his feasts ((9)).

It is embellished with fine sandstone and worked with gold throughout. Its pavement is decorated with silver, and all its doorways

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 375)

with gold. **Two great obelisks have been erected, one on each side, so that my father may appear between them**, while I am in his retinue. I have sacrificed to him thousands of oxen, as well as choice cuts.

Words spoken by {attributed to} **Amon-Re, King of the Gods ((10)): –**

My son, of my body, my beloved, Neb-maat-Re {the Throne Name of Amenhotep III; note the almost New Testament-like language}**,**
My living image, whom my body created,

Whom Mut, Mistress of Ishru in Thebes, the Lady of the Nine Bows, bore to me, And (she) nursed thee as the Sole Lord of the people –

My heart is very joyful when I see thy beauty; I *work* a wonder for thy majesty ((11)),
That thou mightest renew youth,
According as I made thee to be Re of the Two Banks.

When I turn my face to the south, I *work* a wonder for thee: –
I make the princes of the wretched Ethiopia bestir themselves for thee,
Bearing all their tribute upon their backs.

When I turn my face to the north, I *work* a wonder for thee: –
I make the countries of the ends of Asia come to thee,
Bearing all their tribute upon their backs.
They themselves present to thee their children,
Seeking that thou mightest give to them the breath of life.

When I turn my face to the west, I *work* a wonder for thee: –
I let thee take Libya – they cannot escape – (*Shut*) *up* in this fortress bearing the name of (thy) majesty, (30)
Surrounded with a great wall reaching to heaven,
And settled with the children of the princes of the Nubian barbarians.

When I turn my face to the orient, I *work* a wonder for thee: –
I make the countries of Punt ((12)) come to thee,
Bearing all the sweet plants of their countries,
To beg peace from (thee and to) breathe the breath of thy giving.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 376, emphasis added)

Footnotes:

((1)) This was the now destroyed mortuary temple, which stood behind the Colossi of Memnon.

((2)) The pharaoh himself.

((3)) “Like the Aton.”

((4)) The official post of the king in the temple; cf. pp. 248, 446.

((5)) On the policy of bringing Syrian princelings to Egypt, see pp. 239, 248.

((6)) It has the leadership of the two lands. The translation omits several lines dealing with the building of other temples.

((7)) Eastern lands in general; here specifically the Lebanon.

((8)) The translation omits the remainder of the description of Amon’s sacred barge upon the river and a statement of the building of the Third Pylon at Karnak.

((9)) A. Varille, *Karnak I* (Cairo, 1943), 14–15, believes that this refers to the Temple of Amon-Re Montu in the northern group at Karnak.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 375)

((10)) On the ancestry of this hymn, see p. 373.

((11)) Or: “I wonder at thy majesty,” as in the Thut-mose III hymn.

((12)) An incense-producing country on or near the Red Sea.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 376)

The Quadricentennial of the Founding of the City of Tanis Inscription

{This inscription should be of great interest to the reader, since there is not much information to be found on the topic of the "Hyksos" city of Tanis elsewhere. – E.S.}

{James B. Pritchard's editorial introduction to the message of the so-called four-hundred-year-stela:}

About the year 1330 B.C., when Hor-em-heb was pharaoh, a vizier of Egypt named Seti came to the city Tanis in the Delta to celebrate a four hundredth anniversary.

{Here we once again see the Ancient Near Eastern texts volume employing the "High Chronology" manner of dating (moving events up to several decades backwards in time), since the traditional chronology locates the reign of Horemheb to the period **1319–1292**. Horemheb or Hor-em-hab, Horus is in jubilation, reversed the theological mayhem wrought by Akhenaten and his supporters, and returned Egypt to what he viewed as the true religion. – E.S.}

This anniversary {of Tanis} took the form of the worship of the Egyptian god Seth, who is represented in the scene carved on the stela as an Asiatic deity in a distinctively Asiatic dress.

Somewhere close to four hundred years before 1330 B.C., the Hyksos had begun their rule in Egypt, and the Hyksos capital Avaris was probably the later Tanis and the later city Ramses {an old hypothesis now thoroughly refuted by later research; Avaris was in fact located at the site now known as Tell el Dab'a, at the now extinct Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and not where Tanis was, and "Ramses" or Ramesses or Pi-Ramesses was a later urban development in the vicinity of Avaris – c.f. Manfred Bietak's work}, while the god of the Hyksos was equated by the Egyptians with Seth. ((1))

The celebration therefore commemorated the four hundredth year of the rule of Seth as a king, and apparently also the four hundredth year since the founding of Tanis. ((2))

It was, of course, out of the question that the Egyptians should mention the hated Hyksos in such a commemoration, but Seth held a high position under the Nineteenth Dynasty, with two pharaohs named Seti, “Seth’s Man.”

Later the father of this vizier Seti became the pharaoh Ramses I and founded a dynastic line. Seti himself became the pharaoh Seti I.

When his son Ramses II enlarged the city Tanis to be his capital city Ramses,((3)) he set up a stela to justify Tanis’ claim to rule, **on the ground that the god Seth had ruled there for four hundred years**.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 252)

Footnotes

((1)) cf. p. 231, n.9.

((2)) Numbers (13:22), carries the tradition that Tanis (Zoan) and Hebron in Palestine were founded at approximately the same time.

((3)) For the argument that Tanis, the Hyksos capital Avaris, and the city Ramses were one and the same, see A. H. Gardiner in *JEA*, xix (1933), 122–28.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 252)

The “Stela of the Year 400” was found at Tanis. See the latest publication by P. Montet in *Kemi*, IV (1933), 191–215. The significance of the stela was stated by K. Sethe in *ZAeS*, LXV (1930), 85–89.

There is a translation in Breasted, *AR*, 111, §§538–42.

The scene above the inscription designates the Asiatic-garbed Seth as “Seth of Ramses,” thus locating him in the residence city of that name.

{The text itself (translation; quote:)}

(I) **Live the Horus: Mighty Bull**, Who Loves Truth, … (Ramses II). ((4))

(5) His majesty commanded the making of a great stela of granite bearing the great name of his fathers, in order to set up **the name of the father of his fathers** ((5)) (and of) the King Men-maat-Re, the Son of Re: Seti Mer-ne-Ptah, ((6)) enduring and abiding forever like Re every day:

“Year 400, 4th month of the third season, day 4, ((7)) of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Seth-the-Great-of-Strength; the Son of Re, his beloved: The-Ombite, ((8)) beloved of Re-Har-akhti, so that he exists forever and ever.

Now there came the Hereditary Prince; Mayor of the City and Vizier; Fan-Bearer on the Right Hand of the King, Troop Commander; ((9)) Overseer of Foreign Countries; Overseer of the Fortress of Sile; ((10)) Chief of Police, Royal Scribe; Master of Horse; Conductor of the Feast of the Ram-the-Lord-of-Mendes; High Priest of Seth; Lector Priest of Uto, She-Who-Opens-the-Two-Lands; and Overseer of the Prophets of All the Gods, Seti, the triumphant, ((11)) the son of the Hereditary Prince; Mayor of the City and Vizier;

(10) Troop Commander; Overseer of Foreign Countries; Overseer of the Fortress of Sile; Royal Scribe; and Master of Horse, Pa-Ramses, the triumphant, ((12)) and child of the Lady of the House and Singer of the Re, Tiu, the triumphant.

He said: 'Hail to thee, O Seth, Son of Nut, the Great of Strength in the Barque of Millions, ((13)) felling the enemy at the prow of the barque of Re, great of battle cry …! *Mayest* [*thou*] *give me* a good lifetime serving [thy] ka, while I remain in [*thy favor*] …'" ((14))

Footnotes:

((4)) The long titulary of Ramses II is here omitted.

((**5)) The god Seth, conceived as the ancestor of the royal line.**

((6)) Seti I.

((7)) Around the year 1330 B.C., this date would have fallen late in June.

((8)) The god is supplied with a "great name," a pharaonic titulary, to enforce the claim of dynastic ancestry.

((9)) This title is carved twice through dittography.

((10)) Or Tjaru, the frontier fortress on the eastern Delta.

((11)) By the time his son Ramses II set up this stela, Seti was dead.

((12)) "The Ramses," the later Ramses I.

((13)) Referring to Seth’s activity in repelling the serpent demon which attacked the sun barque. See pp. 6–7.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 253)

The “Marriage Stela” – the affirmation of a great alliance between Egypt and the Indo-European people of Hatti (the “Hittites”), motivated by the grave danger to both civilizations posed by the “Sea Peoples” (c. 1245 B.C.)

{James B. Pritchard’s editorial introduction to the text celebrating the union between King Ramesses II and a princess from Hattusa, the capital of Hatti:}

Ultimately, both the Egyptians and the Hittites found the war expensive of energies which had to be saved against the encroachments of the Peoples of the Sea. In the 21st year of Ramses II (perhaps 1280 b.c.), a treaty was concluded between Egypt and Hatti, providing for an offensive and defensive alliance; see pp. 199–201 {in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*}.

By Ramses II’s 34th year (perhaps 1267 b.c.), the alliance between Egypt and Hatti was given visible expression through a royal marriage between the pharaoh and the eldest daughter of the Hittite king.

{Once again, the reader is reminded that Pritchard is adhering to a "high" system of chronology, while the more conventional time frame assigned to the reign of Ramesses II or Ramesses the Great is **1279–1213**. This would place the two events mentioned by Pritchard above in c. **1258** and c. **1245**, respectively. – E.S.}

This was not the first international marriage, as the pharaohs preceding the Amarna period had taken royal

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 256)

wives from the Mitannian princesses. Egyptian texts treated such a marriage as a surrender of the Hittites, on the theme that the princess was the chief element of "tribute" sent to Egypt, after Hatti had been defeated by the pharaoh.

The "Marriage Stela" is a document which mingles bombast with genuine relief at a successful peace after years of fighting. The stelae at Karnak, Elephantine, and Abu Simbel are presented, with translation, by Ch. Kuentz in *ASAE*, xxv (1925), 181–238.

A recently discovered version at Amarah in the Sudan is still unpublished (*JEA*, xxiv [1938], 155).

An abbreviated version of the text from Karnak, published by G. Lefebvre in *ASAE*, xxv (1925), 34–45, aids in giving the end of the text. The earlier treatment of the text is given in Breasted, *AR*, m, §§415–24.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 257)

{The text itself (translation; excerpt; quote:)}

Then the great princes of every land, when they passed by them, were dismayed, turned back, shrinking, when they saw all the people of Hatti as they [joined] with the army of the king *Ramses II.

So one of these princes said to his fellow: “What his majesty has said is true … How great are these [things] which we have seen with our own faces! Every foreign country is with [him] as slaves, in one accord with [Egypt]! *Ramses II. That which had been the land of Hatti, behold, it has come to be like Egypt with him. *What is* the heaven? It (also) is under his seal, so that it acts according to all that he has wished! *Ramses II.”

Now after [many days they] reached (the city) Ramses Meri-Amon, … and we celebrated the great marvels of valor and victory in the year 34, 3rd month of the second season. ((24)) *Ramses II.

Then they ushered the daughter of the Great Prince of Hatti, who had come marching to Egypt, into the presence of his majesty, ((25)) with very great tribute following her, without limit. …

Then [his] majesty saw that she was fair of face [like] a goddess.

Now (it was) a great, mysterious, marvellous, and fortunate affair.

It was unknown, unheard of from mouth to mouth, not mentioned in the writings of the ancestors …

*Ramses II.

So she was beautiful in the heart of his majesty, and he loved her more than anything, as a good fortune for him through [the command of] his father Ptah-tenen. ((26))

*Ramses II. ((27))

Then his majesty caused that her name be made to be: the King's Wife Maat-nefru-Re, ((28)) the daughter of the Great Prince of Hatti and the daughter of the Great Princess of Hatti …

And so it was that, if a man or a woman proceeded on their mission to Djahi, they could reach the land of Hatti without fear around about their hearts, because of the greatness of the victories of his [maj]esty.

(Pritchard, 1969, pp. 257–258)

Editorial notes

For the treaty of peace between Egypt and the Hittites in the reign of Ramses II, see pp. 199–201 above.

For the "Israel Stela," a hymn of victory of Mer-ne-Ptah, see pp. 376–378 below.

For a literary document giving a satirical account of conditions in Syria-Palestine from the standpoint of an Egyptian official, see pp. 475–479 below.

Footnotes:

{It is not entirely clear why an asterisk (*) precedes the name of Ramesses the Second in this translation.}

((23)) In the account of the Battle of Kadesh, this term {teher-warriors} is applied to the Hittite chariot-warriors. See also p. 239, n.3.

((24)) About 1267 B.C., this date would coincide generally with the month of January.

((25)) The relief above the inscription in the temple of Abu Simbel shows the Hittite king and his daughter coming into the presence of Ramses II.

((26)) In the “Blessing of Ptah” (Breasted, *AR*, m, §410), it is this god who delivers Hatti and its princess to Ramses II.

((27)) From this point on, the longer texts are badly damaged, and the translation uses the abbreviated version: Lefebvre, *op.cit.*, 40–41, lines 16–18.

((28)) In Egyptian: “She Who Sees the Beauty of Re”; cf. p. 29.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 258)

King Merneptah’s “Hymn of Victory” (The “Israel Stela”) (c. 1208 B.C.)

{James B. Pritchard’s editorial introduction to Merneptah’s celebration of his decisive victory over an alliance of Libyan and Sea People’s tribes (one of *five* such texts):}

The date of this commemorative hymn (or series of hymns) relates it to Mer-ne-Ptah’s victory over the Libyans in the

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 376)

spring of his fifth year (about 1230 B.C.). {According to the more traditional chronology already mentioned, Merneptah (birth name Mer en Ptah, hotep her Maat; Beloved of Ptah, Maat is satisfied – throne name Ba en Ra, mery netjeru; The Soul of Ra, beloved by the gods) reigned from 1213–1203, and his triumph over the Libyans took place in c. 1208 B.C. – E.S.} However, the text is not historical in the same sense as two other records of that victory, but is rather a poetic eulogy of a universally victorious pharaoh. Thus it was not out of place to introduce his real or figurative triumph over Asiatic peoples in the last poem of the hymn.

In that context we meet the only instance of the name “Israel” in ancient Egyptian writing. The “Israel Stela,” now Cairo 34025, was discovered by Petrie in the ruins of Mer-ne-Ptah’s mortuary temple at Thebes.

There is also a fragmentary duplicate in the Temple of Karnak.

First published by W. M. F. Petrie, Six Temples at Thebes (London, 1897), Pls. xiii-xiv, later by P. Lacau, *Steles du nouvel empire* (*Catalogue general des antiquitis igypHennes du Music du Caire*, Cairo, 1909), I, 52 ff.

The Karnak duplicate published by Ch. Kuentz in *BIFAO*, xxi (1923), 113–17.

W. Spiegelberg studied and translated the text in *ZAeS*, xxxiv (1896), 1–25. A later translation in Erman, *LAE*, 274–78. ((1)) Translated also by Williams, op.cit., 137–41.

{The text itself (translation; quote)}

Year 5, 3rd month of the third season, day 3, under the majesty of the Horus:

Mighty Bull, Rejoicing in Truth; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt:

Ba-en-Re Meri-Amon; the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat.

The magnification of the strength and the exaltation of the strong arm of the Horus:

Mighty Bull, who smites the Nine Bows ((2)), whose name is given to eternity forever. The relation of his victories in all lands, to cause that every land together know and to let the virtue in his deeds of valor be seen:

the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re Meri-Amon; the Son of Re:

Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat; the Bull, lord of strength, slaying his foes, gracious on the field of valor when his conquest has been effected;

The sun, uncovering the cloud which had been over Egypt
And letting Egypt see the rays of the sun disc;
Removing the mountain of metal from the neck of the people,
So that he might give breath to the folk who had been shut in;
Appeasing the heart of Memphis over their enemies,
And making Ta-tenen ((3)) rejoice over those rebellious to him;
Opening the doors of Memphis which had been barred
And letting its temples receive their food (again);
the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re MeriAmon; the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat;

The sole one, restoring the courage of hundred-thousands,
For breath enters into their nostrils at the sight of him;

Penetrating the land of Temeh ((4)) in his lifetime,
And setting the terror of eternity in the hearts of the Meshwesh.

(Page 376).

He causes to turn back the Rebu, who had trodden Egypt, Great dread being in their hearts because of Egypt.

Their advanced guard abandoned their rear. Their legs did not stop, except to run. Their archers abandoned their bows. The heart of their runners was weak from traveling. They untied their waterskins, thrown on the ground; their packs were loosed and cast aside.

The wretched enemy prince of Rebu was fled in the depth of the night, by himself. No feather was on his head; ((5)) his feet were unshod. His women were taken before his face. The loaves for his provision were seized; he had no water of the waterskin to keep him alive. The face of his brethren was fierce, to slay him; among his commanders one fought his companion. Their tents were burned up, made ashes. All his goods were food for the troops. ((6))

He reached his (own) country, and he was in mourning. Every survivor in his land was (too) aggrieved (to) receive him. “The prince (whose) plume evil fortune opposed!” they all say to him, those belonging to his town.

“He is in the power of the gods, the lords of Memphis; The Lord of Egypt makes a curse of his name: – ‘Merey ((7)) is the abominated one of Memphis,
One and the son of one of his family to eternity.
Ba-en-Re Meri-Amon shall be in pursuit of his children; Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat is given him as a fate!’”

He is become a proverbial saying for Rebu; (10) Generation says to generation of his victories:

– “It was not done to us another time since (the days of) Re!” So he says, every old man, speaking to his son.

Woe to Rebu! They have ceased to live (in) the pleasant fashion of one who goes about in the field. Their going *is checked* in a single day. The Tehenu are consumed in a single year, for Seth ((8)) has turned his back upon their chief; their settlements are abandoned on his account. There is no work of carrying baskets in these days. It is advantageous to hide, for one is safe in the cave. The great Lord of Egypt is powerful; victory belongs to him. Who can fight, knowing his unhindered stride? Foolish and witless is he who takes him on! He who transgresses his frontier knows not for himself the morrow.

“As for Egypt,” they say, “since (the time of) the gods, (she has been) the sole daughter of Re, and his son is he who is on the throne of Shu. ((9) o heart has made a reputation for attacking her people, for the eye of every god is in pursuit of him who covets her, and

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 377)

she it is who will carry off the end of her enemies.”

So they say, those who watch the stars and who know all their magic spells by looking at the winds. ((10))

“A great wonder has fallen to Egypt! He who attacked her has been given (into) her hand as a living captive, through the counsels of the divine king, righteous against his enemies in the presence of Re.”

Merey is he who did evil and subversive things against every god who is in Memphis. He is the one (15) with whom there was litigation in Heliopolis, and the Ennead ((11)) made him guilty because of his crimes.

The All-Lord has said: “Give the strong arm ((12)) to my son, the exact of heart, the merciful and kindly, Ba-en-Re Meri-Amon, the one who is solicitous for Memphis, who answers (on behalf of) Heliopolis, opening the towns which had been shut up, that he might set free many who had been imprisoned in every district, that he might give offerings to the temples, that he might cause incense to be brought in before the god, that he might cause the great to possess their property (again), that he might cause the poor to turn (again to) their cities.”

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 377)

Thus speak the lords of Heliopolis about their son, Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat:

“Give him a lifetime like Re, that he may answer (on behalf of) him who is suffering because of any country. Egypt has been assigned to him to be the portion of him who represents her, for himself forever, so that he might protect his people. Behold, as one dwells in the time of the mighty one, the breath of life comes immediately. The valiant one, who causes goods to flow to the righteous man – there is no cheat who retains his plunder. He who gathers the fat of wickedness and the strength of others (shall have) no children.” So they speak.

Merey, the wretched, *ignorant* enemy of Rebu, was come to attack the “Walls of *the Sovereign*” ((13)) the son of whose lord has arisen in his place, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re Meri-Amon; the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat.

Ptah said about the enemy of Rebu: ((14)) “Gather together all his crimes, (20) returned upon his (own) head. Give him into the hand of Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat, that he may make him disgorge what he has swallowed, like a crocodile. Now behold, the swift carries off the swift; the Lord, conscious of his strength, will ensnare him. It is Amon who binds him with his hand, so that he may be delivered to his *ka* in Hermonthis; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re Meri-Amon; the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat.”

Great joy has arisen in Egypt; Jubilation has gone forth in the towns of Egypt.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 377)

They talk about the victories
Which Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat made in Tehenu:
“How amiable is he, the victorious ruler! How exalted is the king among the gods! How fortunate is he, the lord of command! Ah, how pleasant it is to sit when there is gossip!”

One walks with unhindered stride on the way, for there is no fear at all in the heart of the people. The forts are left to themselves, the wells (lie) open, accessible to the messengers. The battlements of the wall are calm in the sun until their watchers may awake. The Madjoi are stretched out {or in a state of relaxation?} as they sleep; the Nau and Tekten are in the meadows as they wish. ((18)) The cattle of the field are left as free to roam without herdsman, (even) crossing the flood of the stream.

There is no breaking out of a cry in the night: “*Halt! Behold, a comer comes with* the speech of strangers!,” (but) one goes and comes (25) with singing.

There is no cry of people as when there is mourning.

Towns are settled anew again.

He who plows his harvest will eat it.

Re has turned himself around (again) to Egypt.

He was born as the one destined to be her protector, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re MeriAmon; the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat.

The princes are prostrate, saying: “Mercy!” {Actually “Shalam”; Shalom …} ((16))

Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.

Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified; Plundered is the Canaan with every evil; Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer; Yanoam is made as that which does not exist; ((17)) Israel is laid waste, his seed is not; ((18)) Hurra is become a widow for Egypt! ((19))

All lands together, they are pacified; Everyone who was restless, he has been bound by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re MeriAmon; the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat, given life like Re every day.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 378)

Footnotes

((1)) In two scenes above the inscription, the god Amon-Re extends a scimitar to Mer-ne-Ptah for Pharaoh’s use against “every foreign

country.” Thus the god commissioned the Pharaoh to undertake a campaign, cf. n.12 below.

((2)) The nine traditional enemies of Egypt.

((3)) A god of Memphis.

((4)) Temeh, Meshwesh, Rebu (= Libyans), and Tehenu were names for various groups of Libyans, originally distinct, now to some extent interchangeable.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 376)

((5)) Libyan warriors wore a feather in the headdress.

((6)) Plunder for the Egyptian troops.

((7)) The Libyan prince.

((8)) The Egyptians used their god Seth as a god of foreign peoples.

((9)) Egypt was thus the daughter of Re, and the pharaoh, who was by dogma the Son of Re, sat upon the throne of Shu, the air-god who was the direct divine son of Re.

((10)) The diviners by stars and winds see the evil eye of the gods as being against any of Egypt’s attackers.

((11)) The Ennead, the nine gods of Heliopolis over whom Atum-Re presided, is here conceived to be judging Mer-ne-Ptah and the Libyan ruler Merey. In the following context, first Re, the All-Lord, gives his verdict and reward to the victorious pharaoh, and then the Ennead confirm this award.

((12)) The word may mean “scimitar.” cf. n.1 above.

((13)) Or the “Walls of (the god) Ta-tenen”? In either case, Memphis.

((14)) Karnak variant: “Amon said about this one of Rebu.”

((15)) The Madjoi were Sudanese used as police in Egypt. The word then came to mean “police.” The Nau and Tekten policed the desert frontier.

{C.f. my digitized edition of Sir Alan Gardiner’s ground-breaking 1916 journal article on and pioneering translation of the message inscribed on “the First Kamose Stela” (“the Carnarvon Tablet”), in which black African warriors called “Mazoï” (Sir Gardiner’s way of rendering the Egyptian term the James B. Pritchard version transliterates as “Madjoi”) are spoken of at some length in conjunction with King Kamose’s account of his initial battles against the ‘A’amu (Amu) or Setyu, the nation which is now better known as the “Hyksos” (a term which should not, strictly speaking, be applied to the Amu in general, as a people, since “Hyksos” is an Egyptian designation for the Amu rulers, the so-called “Hyksos pharaohs”), and which should probably be equated with the “Proto-Israelites”; the ancestors of the “Jews”. Here are the passages on the First Kamose Stela mentioning the Black Africans:

> Now they were displeasing in the heart of His Majesty: – “As for your counsels … these ‘A’amu, who … [Behold, I will fight (?)] with the ‘A’amu, until (?) good fortune comes. If … with weeping. The entire land [shall acclaim me (?) the victorious ruler (?)] within Thebes, Kamose, who protects Egypt.”
>
> I sailed down as a champion to overthrow the ‘A’amu by the command of Amun, just of counsels, my army being valiant in front of me like a fiery blast; **troops of Mazoï on the top (?) of our**

> **strongholds (?) to spy out the Setyu and to destroy their places**;
>
> East and West bringing their fat, and my army abounding in supplies everywhere. **I sent forth a strong troop of Mazoï**, and spent a while (?) in order to coop up (??) … Teti the son of Piopi in Nefrusi. I suffered him not to escape. I turned back the Asiatics, I … Egypt …, and he made (?) as one who … the power of the Asiatics.
>
> I spent the night in my ship, my heart being glad.

(Gardiner, 1916, p. 108, emphasis added)

This is how Sir Gardiner interprets the term Mazoï:

> The name Mazoï really refers to a particular race of Nubians, whom the Egyptians appear to have used as auxiliaries. In the New Kingdom the word seems to be used in a non-ethnic sense to mean something like “policeman”; and some have thought it to be the origin of the Coptic [matoi] “soldier,” for which at all events we have no other satisfactory derivation (see, however, GRIFFITH, *Rylands Papyri*, p. 319).

(Gardiner, 1916, p. 105, emphasis added)

}

((16)) Or “Peace!” The Canaanite word shalam is used here.

((17)) Hatti was the land of the Hittites. Yanoam was an important town of northern Palestine.

((18)) Much has been made of the fact that the word Israel is the only one of the names in this context which is written with the determinative of people rather than land. Thus we should seem to have the Children of Israel in or near Palestine, but not yet as a settled people. This would have important bearing on the date of the Conquest. This is a valid argument. Determinatives should have meaning, and a contrast between determinatives in the same context should be significant. This stela does give the country determinatives to settled peoples like the Rebu, Temeh, Hatti, Ashkelon, etc., and the determinative of people to unlocated groups like the Madjoi, Nau, and Tekten. The argument is good, but not conclusive, because of the notorious carelessness of Late-Egyptian scribes and several blunders of writing in this stela. The statement that the "seed," i.e. offspring, of Israel had been wiped out is a conventional boast of power at this period.

((19)) The land of the biblical Horites, or Greater Palestine.

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 378)

The four Inscriptions of King Ramesses III at "Medinet Habu" Commemorating the destruction of the *second wave* of the so-called Sea Peoples (c. 1179 B.C.),

and hinting at the deployment of a “secret weapon”

{James B. Pritchard’s editorial introduction to these texts:}

In the latter half of the second millennium B.C. there were extensive movements in the eastern Mediterranean area. Masses of homeless peoples moved slowly across the sea and its coastlands, displacing or merging with the older populations. These migrations ended the Minoan civilization in Crete, contributed to the historical populations of Greece and Italy, wiped out the Hittite Empire, thrust the Philistines into Canaan, and washed up on the shores of Egypt.

In Ramses Ill’s eighth year (about 1188 B.C.) the pharaoh met and checked their attempt to push into the rich lands of the Nile. The victory was only a check, because the Egyptian Empire in Asia ended shortly after. {If we go by the more traditional chronology, Ramesses III (Ra-messu heqa lunu; Ra is born, ruler of Heliopolis (Lunu), the birth name of the king) reigned from **1187–1157**, and the invasion of the Delta occurred in **1179**.}

The following accounts of this war come from Ramses Ill’s temple of Medinet Habu at Thebes. The texts were published by the Epigraphic Expedition.

{This is probably a reference to the Architectural and Epigraphic Surveys of the University of Chicago Oriental Institute.}

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 262)

{Some independent researchers, such as the English writer and historian Ralph Ellis, have suggested that the “Sea Peoples” invasions were not simply ancient examples of a “Völkerwanderung”, as German historians have tended to call the vast migrations of various European peoples in the early parts of the Christian era, but a carefully planned and prepared attack on Egyptian civilization carried out, for the most part, by remnants of the “Hyksos” and their confederates, who had regained some their former strength, and who wanted to avenge themselves on the Egyptians for having rebelled against the overlordship of and expelled their ancestors, the “Amu”, and to re-establish their former control over the Egyptian Nile Delta.

This thesis is rendered rather plausible by the fact that at least some of these peoples were Semitic, that they were exceedingly well equipped with regards to arms (as we have seen above; the Meshwesh who attacked Egypt during the reign of King Merneptah were in possession of at least 9,111 copper swords, a number I find very interesting), that they, like the “Hyksos” of the City of Avaris of the 1500s B.C., commended a huge fleet (c.f. the Second Kamose Stela), and that the Semitic Phoenicians of the Levant, with whom the “Hyksos” of the time of Apep/Apophis had clearly been in touch, and of whom these “Hyksos” were in fact a branch, would appear to have either allied themselves with the Sea Peoples, or to have been closely related to them, or to have been able to pay them off – for while the mysterious seafaring tribes not only launched a huge assault on Egypt, but also attacked and virtually wiped out the civilization of the Indo-European Hittites, who had entered into a league with the Egyptians, as well as the Minoan civilization of Crete and the Mycenaean civilization of Greece, the cities controlled by the Phoenicians were, according to archaeologists, left entirely unscathed.

When one adds to this picture the likelihood that the resurgent 18th dynasty of Egypt, the dynasty responsible for having decisively defeated the “Hyksos” of Avaris and for having pursued the “Amu” into

Canaan/Palestine, may have been allied with the Minoans in some way – as the presence of Minoan wall frescos from the time when Egypt was liberated from the “Hyksos” overlordship would seem to suggest (c.f. Manfred Bietak’s reports from the Austrian excavations in Avaris) – the proposal that what has been portrayed as a more or less haphazard invasion of “peoples of the sea” was actually a “Hyksos”-Phoenician attempt to regain the dominant position their ancestors had been in possession of some four hundred years before seems probable indeed.}

The “Sea Peoples” texts from “Medinet Habu” themselves

{The *italics* are those of the original translation. Unfortunately, it is not always clear why certain terms have been thus rendered. As for the translator’s frequent use of both (parentheses) and [square brackets], they seem to mark his addition of words or phrases supposed by him to have been present in the original message, but to now be lost due to a lack of legibility, or to deliberate erasure.}

a {the first text (quote; translation)}

{The Aims of the Sea Peoples Conspiracy Frustrated – by a Secret Egyptian Weapon?}

(I) Year 8 under the majesty of (Ramses III) …

(16) … The foreign countries made a *conspiracy* in their islands. All at once the lands were removed and scattered in the fray. No land could stand before their arms, from Hatti {the name of the land of the Indo-European Hittites, located in Anatolia}, Kode, Carchemish, Arzawa, and Alashiya on, ((1)) being cut off *at* [*one time*].

A camp [was set up] in one place in Amor. ((2)) They desolated its people, and its land was like that which has never come into being.

They were coming forward toward Egypt, **while the flame was prepared** before them. Their confederation was the Philistines, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Weshesh, ((3)) lands united.

{Might this “confederation” of tribes be the closest analogy in real history to the supposed “Twelve Tribes of Israel”, which may never have existed in the form given to them by the Old Testament narratives? The name of one of the members of the league, Denyen, is almost identical to Dan, one of the alleged “Twelve Tribes”.}

They laid their hands upon the lands as far as the circuit of the earth, their hearts confident and trusting: “Our plans will succeed!”

Now the heart of this god, the Lord of the Gods, was prepared and ready to ensnare them like birds …

{Here the pharaoh, Ramesses III, seems to be speaking in the capacity of a living incarnation of the Most High God. – E.S.}

I organized my frontier in Djahi, ((4)) prepared before them: – princes, commanders of garrisons, (20) and *maryanu*. ((5))

I have the river-mouths ((6)) prepared like a strong wall, with warships, galleys and coasters, (*fully*) *equipped*, for they were manned completely from bow to stern with valiant warriors carrying their weapons.

The troops consisted of every picked man of Egypt. They were like lions roaring upon the mountain tops. The chariotry consisted of runners, of *picked men*, of every good and capable chariot-warrior. The horses were

quivering in every part of their bodies, prepared to crush the foreign countries under their hoofs.

I was the valiant Montu, ((7)) standing fast at their head, so that they might gaze upon the capturing of my hands … {Or rather “that which my hands is capturing”?}

Those who reached my frontier, their seed is not, their heart and their soul are finished forever and ever. Those who came forward together on the sea, **the full flame was in front of them at the river-mouths**, while a stockade of lances surrounded them on the shore. ((8)) {Here we may observe that a mysterious “flame”, apparently having the character of a weapon of some kind, is also mentioned in the famous *Ipuwer* papyrus text – E.S.}

They were dragged in, enclosed, and prostrated on the beach, killed, and made into heaps from tail to head. Their ships and their goods were as if fallen into the water.

I have made the lands turn back from (even) mentioning Egypt; for when they pronounce my name in their land, then (25) **they are burned up**.

Since I sat upon the throne of Har-akhti and the Great-of-Magic ((9)) was fixed upon my head like Re, I have not let foreign countries behold the frontier of Egypt, to boast thereof **to the Nine Bows**.((10))

I have taken away their land, their frontiers being added to mine. Their princes and their tribespeople are mine with praise, **for I am on the ways of the plans of the All-Lord, my august, divine father, the Lord of the Gods**.

{**Comment:** It is worth noting that this text presents us with an enigma of sorts, since it seems to contains several references to a powerful

Egyptian weapon of some kind –the precise nature of which is unknown to us. This weapon is referred to as “the flame” and “the full flame”, and caused a burning up of many of the invaders, and the survivors in the homelands of the “sea peoples” are still afraid of its effects, according to the Egyptian king. Consider the following sentences:

“They were coming forward toward Egypt, while the flame was prepared before them.”

“Those who came forward together on the sea, the full flame was in front of them at the river-mouths, while a stockade of lances surrounded them on the shore.”

“I have made the lands turn back from (even) mentioning Egypt; for when they pronounce my name in their land, then they are burned up.”

Could it be that the Egyptians had developed a flame-throwing technology, comparable in its terrible effects to the famous and mysterious “Greek fire” used by Constantinople/Byzantium and the Eastern Roman Empire to repel Arab invaders?}

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 263)

b {the second text (quote; translation)}

{The Sea-Peoples Attack by Land and by Sea, but are Repulsed by the Power of Amen-Ra}

((11)) (51) … The northern countries quivered in their bodies, the Philistines, Tjekk[er, and …]. {C.f. the previous text; the Tjekker or Tjeker was one of the peoples or tribes of which the Sea Peoples alliance was

composed; “Their confederation was the Philistines, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Weshesh, lands united (…).}

They cut off their (own) land and were coming, their soul finished. They were *teher*-warriors {meaning chariot-warriors} on land; ((12)) another (group) was on the sea.

Those who came on [land were *overthrown and killed* …]. Amon-Re {or Amen-Ra, or Amun-Ra} was after them, destroying them. Those who entered the river-mouths were like birds ensnared in the net. … Their leaders were carried off and slain. They were cast down and pinioned …

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 263)

c {the third text (quote; translation)}

{Pharaoh Ramesses III Confronts the marauders as Montu, an Egyptian God of War}

{*Editorial description of accompanying image:*} This is a scene showing Ramses III and his troops on the march against the Peoples of the Sea. It moves forward into a scene (Pl. 32 of the publication), in which the pharaoh is engaged in a land battle with the invaders. The logic of this arrangement is that the land battle was in Djahi.

{*The text itself:*} His majesty sets out for Djahi, like unto Montu, to crush every foreign country that violates his frontier. His troops are like bulls ready upon the field of battle; his horses are like falcons in the midst of small birds …

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 263)

d {the fourth text (quote; translation)}

{ Pharaoh Ramesses III Defeats the Assault of the Barbarians on the Delta}

{*Editorial description of accompanying image:*} This scene shows a naval battle, in which the Egyptian ships grapple with the vessels of the Sea Peoples, while the pharaoh and his land troops fight from the shore.

{*The text itself:*} Now then, the northern countries which were in their islands were quivering in their bodies. They penetrated the channels of the river-mouths. {This must be a reference to the mouths of the several branches of the Nile in the Delta.}

Their nostrils have ceased (to function, so) their desire is to breathe the breath. {This translation seems awkward. The breath was a symbol of life, and the nose a means of upholding it, so perhaps the intended meaning here is that the foreigners, having been killed, are yearning to regain life.}

His majesty has gone forth like a whirlwind against them, fighting on the battlefield like a runner. The dread of him and the terror of him have entered into their bodies. They are capsized and overwhelmed where they are. Their heart is taken away, their soul is flown away. **Their weapons are scattered upon the sea.** His arrow pierces whom of them he may have wished, and the fugitive is become one fallen into the water. ((13))

His majesty is like an enraged lion, attacking his assailant with his arms: plundering on his right hand and powerful on his left hand, **like Seth destroying the serpent** “Evil of Character.” ((14)) {The serpent here

referred to is the monster snake Apep/Apophis, which is obviously conceived of as distinct from Seth.}

It is Amon-Re who has overthrown for him the lands and has crushed for him every land under his feet. {Perhaps “nations” and “nation” would make more sense than “lands” and “land” here, since Ramesses is not in foreign countries here, but is defending Lower Egypt against invading a coalition of tribes.}

(Pritchard, 1969, p. 263)

Footnotes for page 262 and 263:

((1)) Hatti was the Hittite Empire, Kode the coast of Cilicia and northern Syria, Carchemish the city on the Euphrates, Arzawa somewhere in or near Cilicia, and Alashiya probably Cyprus.

((2)) Perhaps in the north Syrian plain or in Coele-Syria. {A region starting to the east of the Phoenician city of Tyre, and stretching into the area of Palmyra.}

((3)) Except for the Philistines (Peleset), these names are rendered close to the Egyptian writings. For the Tjeker, cf. the Wen-Amon story (pp. 25–29 above). The Shekelesh might be the Siculi {of Sicily?}, the Denyen (cuneiform Danuna) might be the Danaoi. The Weshesh cannot easily be related to any later people, cf. G. Bonfante, Who were the Philistines?, in *AJA*, L (1946) 251–62.

{*From the editorial introduction on page 25:* “Wen-Amon, an official of the Temple of Amon at Karnak, tells how he was sent to Byblos on the Phoenician coast to procure lumber for the ceremonial barge of the god.

Egypt had already split into small states and did not support his mission with adequate purchasing value, credentials, or armed force."}

{*From footnote 5 on page 26:* "Dor is the town on the north coast of Palestine. The Tjeker (=Teukroi?) were one of the Sea Peoples associated with the Philistines in the great movements of the 15th to 12th centuries B.C., cf. p. 262. Their prince, Beder, considers it still necessary to show honor to an emissary from Egypt."}

((4)) The Phoenician coast, running down into Palestine. From what little we know of Ramses Ill's sway, his defensive frontier was not north of Palestine. It is possible that the land battle against the Peoples of the Sea was in Asia, whereas the sea battle was on the coast of Egypt; cf. n.6 below.

((5)) From its pictured determinative, the word "princes" meant Asiatics. The *maryanu* were Asiatic warriors; see p. 22, n.2.

{*From The Taking of Joppa on page 22:* "'Have the ma[ryanu] bring in [the horses and give] them feed, or an apir ((4)) may pass by … them {and steal them?}.' So they guarded the horses and gave them feed."

{*From footnote 4 on page 22:* "The 'Apiru were foreigners, some of whom served the Egyptians at this time. For the probable connection of the term 'Apiru with the term appearing in cuneiform as Habiru, the latter being the assumed origin of the word 'Hebrew,' see J. A. Wilson, in *AJSL*, XLIX (1933), 275–80. Habiru was not an ethnic {term?}, and the present 'Apir was not a Hebrew as far as we have any evidence. Cf. p. 247, n.47.}

((6)) Normally used for the mouths of the branches of the Nile in the Delta. Hence probably the line of defense in Egypt. Just possibly, the word might have been extended to harborages on the Asiatic coast.

((7)) The Egyptian god of war.

((8)) One body had to be met on land (in Djahi?), whereas another body had to be met on sea (in the Delta?). The scenes show the boats of the Peoples of the Sea and also a movement by land in oxcarts, with women, children, and goods.

((9)) The uraeus-serpent, symbol of kingship.

((10)) The traditional enemies of Egypt

((11)) From “the Inscription of the Year 5,” but here recording events in the Year 8.

((12)) On *teher* as foreign warriors, see p. 239, n.3.

((13)) The scene shows the capsized boats, the drowning Peoples of the Sea, and Ramses III shooting with unerring arrows.

((14)) The god Seth defended the barque of the sun-god from a dragon, see pp. 11–12.

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